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WOMAN'S AFFECTION.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS,

— BY —

LEWIS WYMAN.

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PERSONS.

Harley Dighby,	Merchant
Helen Dighby,	His Daughter
Mary,	Daughter's Maid
Leonard Fairfield,	Lover
Baron Levy,	Villain
Mr. Harland,	Clerks
Mr. Potter,	Clerks
Mr. Long,	Clerks
Policeman.	
Billy.	Newsboy
Mr. Burk.	
Mr. Turner.	
Porter.	

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ACT I.

In the Park. Morning.

Enter Mr. Harland.

'Tis now about fifteen years since I am in the employ of Mr. Harley Dighby, and during this time I have seen many a ups and downs in every day business life. I have learned many secrets which can only be understood by a good business man, and, when used properly are bound to succeed. Ever since I knew Mr. Dighby, he seemed to be one of the most successful merchants in London. Never knew him to be extravagant; never knew him to be interested in speculation; never knew him to be short in his accounts; never knew of his having serious losses; — yet, at present, his financial affairs are in such a state that he cannot possibly straighten them without calling on some of his friends for assistance, and by so doing loosen his credit, or perhaps astonish half of London by suspending business. And then, what will be his future but a life of shame and misery, yes, if not a life of imprisonment, for which not even the lowest living man could have the slightest desire to taste of. How mean and miserable he must be, with such an outlook before himself, and too what a prospect there is for his daughter. Unhappy are the great, for they may fall, fall a depth from which they may never be able to rise again, and experience a full measure of misery, of which no poor man can possibly imagine. Strange how some of the most successful men will, and must come to ruin. It is a mystery to me how this—

Enter Mr. Potter.

Potter. Good morning Mr. Harland.

Harl. Good Morning.

Pott. Excuse my liberty, Mr. Harland, but I think I've heard you say something about mysteries. Can I in any way assist you to clear them up? Oh! you are surprised; a thousand times I beg your pardon, Mr. Harland; I did not mean to offend you—only I thought—I am very sorry I asked you Mr. Harland, you forgive me, won't you?

Harl. Don't speak of it Mr. Potter, it is nothing what ever, you only surprised me a little by coming so quick, and really, I myself was not aware that I spoke loud enough to be heard by anybody. It was only a little scare, that is all.

Pott. You won't have any hard feelings towards me then?

Harl. Not in the least, my friend. Here, let us have a shake on it.

They shake hands.

Pott. How glad I am. I was afraid I was to lose your friendship.

Harl. Ha! ha! ha! Lose my friendship, aye? Why, I would not want to lose so noble a friend as you because of such trifles; no, indeed I would not.

Pott. Are you not afraid that profuse compliment will turn my head?

Harl. No, not so clever a fellow as you are. I think it takes about ten men of my type to turn your head, and it would be hard work then, I assure you. But come, let us sit down and have a pleasant

talk together ; we don't have many such mornings in London.

Slaps him on the shoulder, and takes seat.

Pott. That's so, Mr. Harland ; mornings like this one are very scarce, indeed.

Harl. My friend, if you want to keep my friendship so much, you must not again call me Mr. Harland. It does not become men of our station in life to be so very distant ; why not let us be friends, and too, when we speak to each other hourly, and are so much together as you and I have to be ; so let us be true friends, and never again call each other Mr., unlesss it is necessary. Am I a friend of yours now?

Extending his hand.

Pott. How can you ask me this question ?

They shake hands heartily.

'Tis months that I have waited for this moment :—no hour in my life seems happier to me than when I meet a friend, whose ideas and tastes harmonize entirely with my own, and I have reasons, yes good reasons to be confident that you are the friend for whom I have been longing.

Harl. Thanks, old boy ; it does me good to know that there is some one who will call me his true friend—some one to trust me—for I assure you, true friends I have found but few ; false ones by the thousands ; for whom can a man trust now-a-days ; in whom can he confide ? A man's best friend is no one less than his own self, and his true friends are as scarce as pearls in the ocean.

Pott. True, very true indeed. By the way, it seems to me that there is something unusual about our employer. He appears to be very much disturbed about something. I really fear there is something wrong about his business. He has been working hard for the last week or so, and always has a certain troubled look on his face that tells me that before long there must be a change for better or worse ; yes, I am afraid it does not mean a change for the lat—. No, no, I must not talk this way ; I might be wrong in judging faces.

Harl. Yes, I have noticed the very action myself, and have the very same opinion about it as you have.

Pott. Indeed ? I hope that there may not be anything serious about his financial affairs.

Harl. I hope so too ; time will tell. This is not a very pleasing subject to speak about, so let us change it to something, perhaps quite as interesting to us. Didn't I hear you say you was going to a party last night ?

Pott. Ha ! ha ! ha ! didn't you ? well I guess you did, and I want to tell you all about it too—ha ! ha !

Harl. Go on, let's have it ; I am anxious to know about it. Did you have a good time ? Many pretty girls there I suppose, for your face tells me that much ?

Pott. It does, aye ? Well you must be good reading faces, for you have struck it just right. Did I have a good time ? ha ! ha ! ha ! Never enjoyed myself better for a good while. Goggins, you know, took me down to his club the other night, and that's the way I came to have the invitation to last night's party down to John Turner's.

Harl. John Turner's ? Whew ! You are getting to be quite a society bug, aye ?

Pott. I thought it rather quite a big thing myself. I kind of hated to go there at first too, but I have found them nothing much beyond my station.

Harl. I should like to have seen you among those many girls, and all pretty ones at that. Didn't you feel kind of queer, old boy?

Pott. At first I did, but I soon got acquainted with them, you know. Oh! that reminds me, too: I have had an introduction to one of the prettiest girls in London. Who do you suppose?

Harl. I couldn't guess. Not the queen herself, I hope?

Pott. No, no. Not quite as high as that.

Harl. Who was it then?

Pott. You know Leonard Fairfield was there too, and—

Harl. He gave you an introduction to his pride, I suppose.

Pott. Exactly so.

Harl. Well, you have the advantage of me there. I have been trying to get an introduction to her this long time.

Pott. I think she is the fairest flower that was ever brought up in London.

Harl. Isn't she though?

Pott. Mr. Fairfield has made a good choice, and I guess it will pay him well to be the son-in-law of Mr. Dighby.

Harl. To be sure. I am afraid you will set up as a rival to Fairfield, and then—

Pott. Whew! Is that what you think of me? It would not do me any good, I don't think. Miss Dighby enjoyed Leonard Fairfield's company so much that I really think it would be all in vain for any body to try it.

Harl. How well you noted all these things. I really think you like her as well as Leonard does; so let's talk no longer about her, else you might fall in love with her. Come let us go to the office now; I think we have about time enough to take a little walk through the park.

Pott. Yes I think we better.

Exit.

Enter Mr. Dighby, thoughtfully.

Again I find myself in the place where I have spent many a happy hour, recalling to my mind instances of the past, when life was bright and happy; times that never seemed to have any sorrow or trouble for me, and I, the once so prosperous and wealthy Harley Dighby, am soon to bid adieu to all the world, with its pleasures and comforts. Yet a little while and I must yield to the inevitable, must exchange my liberty for the comforts of a prison, to suffer for my evil deeds and treachery. Oh, how true the poet spoke when he said:

"Oh! what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive."

Sits down.

What is life, but a living dream, a gratified fancy, haunted constantly by ever changing pleasures and temptations, followed by moments of sorrow and despair, perchance eternal misery and pain? How painful it is to look back upon a life of treachery and evil deeds! Never before have I seen my own life as clearly as I do now; a life that might have been well spent, surrounded by innumerable opportunities, lying both right and left of my own crooked path. What

would I not give to live my life over again, to correct my errors and make good what I have lost, to do what I have left undone, and now be as happy as I might be. [Silent.

Why trouble now my wounded brain,
For all my sorrows I am to blame.

Why did I not—Hush ! somebody is coming.

Enter Baron Levy.

Good morning, Mr. Dighby.

Digh. Good morning, Baron.

Levy. It's an exceptionally beautiful morning.

Digh. Indeed it is. It makes me think of our lives. Business men do not have but very few sunny days in a year.

Levy. No. indeed they don't. By the way, Mr. Dighby, I think I have a paper to present to you. As I am very busy to-day, I think you will save me considerable of my time by transacting our business now.

Digh. But this is not the place to transact money matters.

Levy. Quite true ; but listen Mr. Dighby, and I will tell you my plan.

Digh. Very well, proceed.

Levy. As I have said before, my time is very valuable, so I propose going to my lawyer's office close by, where you can write me a check for—

Digh. Excuse my interruption Baron Levy, but let us hasten from here as quick as possible.

Levy. What is the matter ? Are you sick Mr. Dighby ?

Digh. No, indeed I am not ; but here comes a man that must not see me here with you.

Levy. Why ! 'tis one of your own clerks, Mr. Fairfield.

Digh. Quite true ; the very man that must not see me here. He is my creditor, and holds documents concerning my business.

Levy. He your cred–i–tor ?

Digh. Let us hasten, I will explain. [Exit.

Enter Leonard Fairfield whistling The Last Rose of Summer.

This song has haunted me day and night for the last two or three days, and I feel just as one that is the last rose of summer, which is soon to fade. Can it be—

Enter Park Policeman.

Hello Leonard ! Nice morning this is, aye ? What's the matter this morning—blue again ?

Leon. Yes, got it again ; can't get rid of it either.

Police. Ha ! ha ! ha ! Can't aye ? Well you must have had some trouble with your best girl. Why can't you young fellers let them girls alone ; don't pay no attention to them and you never will get into trouble, never feel blue and always be happy. As true as you live those girls are a pretty bad toy to handle. Never knew a feller yet that didn't get himself into trouble when he went to make love.

Leon. Oh, it isn't that what gives me the blues. It is some ill omened feeling that's been hovering around me for the last day or two ; some strange feeling as though something horrid was about to happen to me.

Police. (Slapping him on the shoulder.) Is that it ? Never mind, it will all pass away. Come, cheer up now. Try to be as happy as I and you will forget all about it. There ain't but one life to life you

know, so make the best of it and be as happy as you can be. Well, I must be agoing; be good to yourself; short life in this world, you know. [Exit.

Leon. Strange, the poorest people are the happiest, and I having all I can wish for, feel blue all the time. Can it be that the old superstition "misfortune warns its victim constantly" is true? Pshaw! Not in this case. I, Leonard Fairfield, respected in circles of society, honored by everybody, I who holds the rein of his employer, and soon to become the husband of one of the prettiest girls that ever walked the streets of London, meet with misfortune? Impossible!

I wish that it was night again, so that I could steal another kiss from Helen's rosy lips. [Starts to go.]

Ha! Here she comes now, prettier than ever before, too. Strange, that a beautiful woman's face makes a man forget all about himself.

What! she does not see me. Her mind seems troubled. What may be the cause of it?

Enter HELEN, thoughtfully.

Leon. Good morning Helen. Has grief come to you over night?

Hel. Oh how glad I am to meet you Leonard. I want to speak to you and ease my heart.

Leon. Speak freely Helen. Do not let me think that you have one secret that I may not know, nor one sorrow that I may not share. Confide in me and make me happy.

Hel. I was just going to the office to speak to you. My heart is troubled, and I must speak.

Leon. Let us sit down darling, and talk freely. [Take a seat.

Hel. [Fixing a rose in his buttonhole] Leonard, you will excuse me if I have given you unnecessary cause for uneasiness, won't you?

Leon. Can you doubt it, darling? [Kisses her.

Hel. I've been longing to speak to you about my trouble last night, and now I can keep it no longer.

Leon. Open your wounded heart to me Helen, and I will try to sooth it.

Hel. I knew you would, my anxiety lies there. For the last week or so father has been very distant and his mind is very troubled. Every day he grows more nervous and absent minded, and he seems to be laboring under some heavy load upon his heart that he cannot possibly shake off. I think there is something wrong about his business. Now I ask you as my true friend, can you tell me whether papa is in any trouble about his financial affairs? Has he had any losses, that might possibly ruin him, or has he had any trouble in his business of which he will not tell me?

Leonard silent.

Hel. O speak, Leonard. Do not keep me in suspense. Tell me the worst if there is anything wrong.

Leon. Dear Helen, your revelation is very strange to me, and I really do not know of any serious trouble about your father's business, and most earnestly hope that there may not be any.

Hel. Oh how glad I am?

Leon. I will ascertain if possible during the day aud tell you all I know when we meet again.

Hel. And that is?

Leon. To-night. [Kisses her.] And now darling I must be going to the office. How it pains me to leave you.

Hel. I will go with you a little ways.

Leon. How good you are.

They lock arms and exit.

ACT II.

INTERIOR OF COUNTING HOUSE. PRIVATE OFFICE TO RIGHT. CLERKS ALL BUSY.

Harl. I wonder where Billy keeps himself so long.

Long. Perhaps he forgot all about us.

Pott. No danger of that. He'll show up as quick as he gets good and ready.

Harl. But not till then.

Enter MR. BURK.

Burk. Good day gentlemen.

Harl. Good day sir.

Burk. Is Mr. Dighby to be seen?

Harl. Mr. Dighby is not in, sir.

Burk. Could you tell me when he will be in?

Harl. Sorry, I can not, sir.

Burk. I was to see Mr. Dighby at this hour to-morrow, but my business has so changed that I cannot possibly keep my promise. Do you think Mr. Dighby will be in again before the hour of closing?

Harl. I could not tell you anything about it, sir. Mr. Dighby left no word whatever. If there is anything I can do for you I should be very glad to do it, sir.

Burk. No, I think not. But will you give me a sheet of paper and an envelope, please?

Harl. Certainly, sir. [Gives him pen and paper.]

Burk. [Goes to the desk and writes.] Will you please give this to Mr. Dighby as early as you possibly can?

Harl. Yes sir. May I trouble you for your name, please?

Burk. Certain, sir. Mr. Burk. Tell Mr. Dighby I should like to have seen him personally, but can not possibly do so. Good day.

[Exit.

Long. Well gentlemen, what do you say to going to the theatre to-night?

Pott. What theatre do you propose to go to?

Long. The Star.

Harl. What is the play to-hight?

Long. An opera. Faust.

Harl. Faust, aye? That's a good one; let's go and see it. What do you say, Potter?

Pott. I am willing to go if it is a good play.

Harl. Didn't you ever see Faust before?

Pott. Never.

Harl. Well you surely will like it then. I think it is one of the most instructive operas ever put on any stage. Don't you think so too, Long? or have you never seen it?

Long. 'Tis certainly all you claim it to be, and more too, I think.

Pott. Well, if it is as good as that I'll go you. Where will we find each other.

Harl. The usual place is as near as any, I think.

Long. I guess you are right.

Pott. How will 7.30 do you?

Harl. It suits me well enough.

Long. Ditto.

Pott. And I shall be with you too.

Voice outside.

Extry, extry. Dissolution of the parliament.

Pott. There comes Billy now; it sounds like his voice.

Long. So it is. Let's have some fun with him, boys.

Pott. Billy ain't to be fooled with.

Harl. You had better look out or he will make some fun of you, I bet.

Enter BILLY.

Billy. Extry, extry. Dissolution of the Parliament.

Gives Paper to Harland.

Long. Hello, Billy! How do you feel?

Billy. 'Taint no concern of yourn.

Long. It ain't aye? Well then, how is your mother?

Billy. The old gal? She is missing, that's all; but then she allers turns up, she does, and wipes me to rights, too.

Long. That' too bad. I say Billy, can you lend me a sixpence? I am dead broke.

Billy. In course I kin. Say, look here yer bloke; don't I told yer to stop calling me Billy? My name ain't Billy; its William I tell yer, and if yer want a sixpence out of me yer must call me Mr. William, or yer never will get it as true as yer sitting thare.

Long. Whew! You ain't going to be Rothschild, be you?

Billy. In course I be; and I don't want no such flat as you are in my office, either. [Exit. [Outside.] Extry, extry. Dissolution of the parliament.

Pott. What is the trouble in the parliament now? Have you read it, Harland?

Harl. No I have not. There is something more interesting for you, though.

Long. Let us have it, please.

Harl. [Reads.] A closer investigation shows a liability of 250,000 pounds.

Pott. What is that—another failure? Who is it now?

Harl. Oh, I forgot to tell you; 'tis Spencer & Young. [Reads.] The heaviest losers are: Johnson & Co., Harley Dighby, Frank Stone, and a well known firm in Liverpool. No trace has thus far been found of either of the guilty parties. They probably have chosen the capital of sunny France as their future place of safety.

Long whistling low.

Pott. That explains the governor's uneasiness.

Long. I hope it won't ruin him.

Pott. That would be terrible.

Harl. I think we will hear from it when he comes in.

Long. He won't feel much like giving us a check for a present, I bet.

Pott. No danger; he won't write many checks for pleasure just now.

Harl. I bet it won't make Mr. Fairfield very comfortable.

Long. I am afraid he won't have his wedding right off.

Pott. Don't borrow any trouble about him. He is all right.

Enter Mr. Dighby. Goes to Private Office.

Harl. Look sharp boys, the sky is cloudy. [Enter private office.] A gentlemen by the name of Burk called to see you. He wishes you to excuse him for not keeping his promise, and left this for you. [Gives him envelope.] [Exit.

Dighby reads.

Pott. I am afraid there will be an earthquake before long.

Long. I am going to confession to-night to ease my heart.

Pott. You need it bad, I am sure.

Long. Ditto.

Dighby throws aside the letter. Silent, thinking.

Harl. Boys, the governor is feeling awful bad, I assure you.

Pott. 'Tis not to be wondered at.

Long. Do you suppose we ever will learn the whole amount of his loss?

Harl. Hardly.

Digh. [Sighing.] My God! How can I meet my creditors? [Reads.] Papers due Monday, £25,000; Wednesday, £20,000; lost through Spencer & Young, £25,000. The crash can not be avoided. My time has come. [Silent.

Enter Baron Levy.

Levy. Good evening, gentlemen.

Harl. Good evening, Baron Levy.

Levy. Is Mr. Dighby in?

Harl. Yes sir. [Enters private office.] Baron Levy wishes to see you.

Digh. Admit him. [Exit.

Harl. Mr. Dighby awaits you. [Enter Levy.

Levy. Good evening, Mr. Dighby, I hope you are well?

Digh. Quite well thank you. Please take a seat.

Clock striking six. Clerks leave office except Harland.

Levy. I came around to settle this little business affair we spoke about this morning. I tried to get around to it sooner, but could not possibly do it. I hope I am not keeping you too long at your office.

Digh. Not at all.

Enter Mary.

Mary. Good evening, Mr. Harland.

Harl. Good evening, Mary.

Mary. Is Mr. Dighby in? I have a note for him from Miss Helen.

Harl. He is, but just now he is engaged. Anthing serious?

Mary. I believe not.

Harl. Please take a chair and wait till he is at leisure.

Mary takes a chair close to private office door and reads.

Levy. Here it is. [Hands Dighby the note.

Digh. Baron Levy, I cannot possibly meet my note to-day. The failure of Spencer & Young has completely ruined me at present. Ever since this morning I have been trying hard to collect standing

bills, but without the slightest success. Money has played ill with me for the last month or so, and this failure has left me entirely powerless. Can you not give me two weeks time, say 5½ per cent?

Levy. Not without getting myself into the very same position that you are in.

Digh. I'll give you another note for two months with fifty pounds increase.

Levy. That would not do me much good at present, as the sum of your note is already large enough.

Digh. I hope you have not the wrong idea of my business finances.

Levy. Humph! Can not Mr. Fairfield advance the money?

Digh. Don't speak of him, please. He already holds my note for £5,000.

Levy. [Aside.] Now is my chance.

Harl. Good night, Mary. [Exit.

Mary. Good night, Mr. Harland.

Levy. Mr. Dighby, I have a plan.

Digh. I listen.

Levy. It may seem rather strange to you, but it will again put you on solid ground.

Digh. Proceed—proceed.

Levy. The price may seem heavy to you at first, but I think that you will not take it too serious, when you hear my conditions.

Digh. Come to the subject, please.

Levy. 'Tis this: The price is your daughter, Helen.

Digh. I don't understand you; what do you mean?

Levy. I will explain. For the last two years I have had the pleasure of having a slight acquaintance with your daughter. I have met her and spoken to her on several occasions, and indeed I have learned to love her; yes, I might say I have been an ardent admirer of your daughter ever since. I love her with all my heart; her face has haunted me day and night, and it does even now. I have worshipped the very ground she walked upon; but all this without the slightest avail. Make me your son-in-law, and I can give your daughter a home such as a lady of her social standing ought to have. I promise you upon my honor as a Nobleman, that I shall do my utmost to make your daughter as happy and comfortable as ever a living man can do, whose only and constant ambition is this world's happiness. Our little business matter shall be entirely forgotten, and you will again be the prosperous and wealthy Harley Dighby.

Digh. [Sighing loudly] Im–pos–si–ble!

[Mary starts to listen.]

Mr. Fairfield is my creditor too, and then, too, he has my consent to make my daughter his wife. There is no power in the wide world, no temptation great enough, no name big enough, no man cunning enough to make my daughter break her promise, and make her guilty of playing with a man's affections, the virtue she values more than anything else. No, no, that we can never do. Never will my daughter accept the love of one who is willing to pay so high a price as you. Never will she consent to sell her youth and freedom to save even her father from ruin; no indeed, she would not. To go to and from a mill is preferable to her pride.

Levy. Could you, her father, not compel her to accept a lover for a future husband? you, in every way and manner more experienced than your child. Would not all the world justify you in selecting a husband for your daughter, one who is considered more wealthy as well as more worthy of a lady, as your daughter? Would it not be right for you to give your daughter's hand to the one most able to make her future life the happiest and brightest? Does not a father's experience and wisdom amount to a great deal more than that of a child? It is very good of your daughter to be faithful to her promise, yet, would not all the world credit her obedience to her father considerable more than disobedience, should you convince her of the folly of her promise? Would not any loving child accept a well-to-do-suitor's hand to save her father from ruin, and by so doing, perhaps, loosen the grip of misery and shame for ever? Indeed they would.

Digh. Very true indeed, but we must remember that Mr. Fairfield is my creditor too, and that means very much the same in his case as it does in yours.

Levy. Leave all this to me, Mr. Dighby, and I assure you that you will be as prosperous as of old before many days.

Digh. But how will, and can you do it? Mr. Fairfield would by no means be willing to give up my papers, and least of all could he be induced to let his affianced bride become the inexhaustible fountain of happiness of another man's home; no indeed he wouldn't. Too long have I known Mr. Fairfield; too often have I tested his affection for my daughter.

Levy. Answer me a few questions and then we will see what can be done. Remember, that

> Money, man and wit
> Cover many a dangerous split.

Digh. Proceed.

Levy. Does Mr. Fairfield keep his papers in any bank?

Digh. I think not. I believe he told me once that he has no faith in banks.

Levy. Indeed! Ha! Too much self-confidence is not always a good place of safety. Many a man has lost his entire fortune because of self confidence.

Digh. Very true indeed; many a man has been ruined.

Levy. It might possibly prove true in his case. When is the time your papers are to be redeemed?

Digh. No special time set.

Levy. Oh, they are papers given on confidential terms?

Digh. Exactly so.

Levy. 'Tis well, 'tis well. [Thinking.] Mr. Dighby, I have just one more question to ask of you, and that is a favor.

Digh. What is it?

Levy. Will you leave the whole matter entirely in my hands. Let me arrange the matter with Mr. Fairfield according to my own ideas, and I guarantee that by to-morrow night you will be as prosperous as in years past; your ill omened feeling shall no longer make your life a misery, and before you you will have a future as bright and inviting as any man could wish for. By that time I shall have your papers, and you must consent to an immediate marriage with your daughter on the same night.

Mary. Oh! My God what does he mean?

Digh. I can not understand you, Baron Levy. There is two sides to that question. You might arrange matters as you think and you might not. Suppose we speak of the latter, would not my situation be a good deal worse if you and Mr. Fairfield could not come to terms? Would he not be liable to close in upon me as well as you? And then, too, is not my daughter in danger of losing his affections, and so be made miserable forever; for, to tell the truth, I hardly think that after I am ruined you can have the same feeling toward my child as you have now. You must remember, too, that my daughter is the only fruit of my own affectionate wife, and to know her unhappy for life would be eternal torture to me.

Levy. Do not think that of me, Mr. Dighby. Have I not given you my promise, upon my honor, to make your daughter's life as bright and happy as can be wished for. Do you not think me capable of keeping my promises, especially when by so doing I shall be rewarded with a life of bliss and happiness beyond compare. A life that must be heaven itself in this world; a life of joy and love. Is not this the highest ambition of every living man? Do you still doubt my love for your daughter? Do you think that man could make miserable her who is holding his happiness in her own hands; her that is only able to raise his affection to its highest standpoint, and transfer him to an elysium of delight?

Digh. You talk like a poet, indeed. Nothing would be more comforting to my troubled conscience than to know my child to be as happy as you have painted, man. I would be willing to endure anything only to know my only child happy and—

Levy. Leave it all to me, Mr. Dighby. Your daughter shall be happy, and more, you yourself shall be prosperous once again. Have I your promise?

Digh. Give me time to give the matter a good consideration, as it is a very serious one.

Levy. We can not waste time. Your papers are due to-day, and if I wait two days I might lose part of the money, if not all. What we do must be done quick, or I am compelled to turn against you. So, I have your promise?

Dighby silent.

Levy. This is very important for you, as your good name is at stake, and I can not possibly do any different. Can you give me you promise as a man?

Digh. You—have my prom-ise. [Aside.] Villain!

Mary. What will Miss Helen say to that? Poor child, she will be miserable forever. [Exit.

Levy. And now, Mr. Dighby, let me assure you that by to-morrow night you will again be the prosperous and wealthy Harley Dighby as in years past. No longer shall you see ruin before you, but a bright and smiling future shall take forever the stamp of sorrow and contempt from your troubled conscience. Each coming day shall bring hours of joy and happiness, and you will never have cause to regret my being your friend in need.

Digh. I hope so. Let us go from here, I am faint. [They exit.

ACT III.

HELEN DIGHBY IN HER ROOM, AWAITING HER LOVER. SITS ON A TABLE READING, WITH HER BACK TOWARD THE DOOR.

Lays down the book.

I wish Leonard would come. Men are always slow and take their time when they know they are expected. There, now, it is not right for me to talk this way. Leonard likes my company better than anything else; that I know and have proof of. Curious, we women seem to think a great deal more of those we love than we would of ourselves. Oh! how painful it is to wait. [Goes to reading again. Lays down the book.] I wonder where he keeps himself so long? Can he have forgotten about our meeting to-night? Impossible! A true lover never forgets his love, and Leonard is true that I know. Ha! I think I can guess the cause of his delay. He stopped at the Greenhouse or some other store to make me a little surprise, but I have something for him, too. [Takes a rose from her bosom and kisses it.] This is his favorite flower. He surely will like it, I know.

The rose, emblem of virtue and love,
Speaks softly of happiness, with tongues from above.
Its fragrant scent betraying mortal bliss,
As man will stoop to pledge a passing kiss.

[Takes up book again.

Enter LEONARD, softly.

Leon. (To himself.)

Prettier than a rose on the bush,
Diademed with sparkling dewdrops
Reflecting sunbeams manifold.
(Approaches softly, and kisses her.)

Good evening, my darling.

Hel. Good evening, Leonard.

Leon. I hope I have not kept you long in suspense.

Hel. No, not long, yet too long. You are well, I do hope.

Leon. Yes, quite well, thank you. How is my star of love and future happiness?

Hel. I am well, my love, and happy when you are present.

(Takes the rose, and puts it in his button-hole.)

Leon. My beauteous star of love, my favorite flower. [Kisses her.

Hel. Why is the rose your favorite flower, Leonard?

Leon. I was not speaking of the rose as my favorite flower in this instance. I meant a rose far superior to any I have ever seen before. There is but one specimen of this rose, and that is you, my own true love. Your presence is dearer and sweeter to me than all the perfumes of Arabia, and your voice more soothing than the sweetest draught. [Kisses her.

Hel. But why is the rose your favorite flower?

Leon. Because its mystery and meaning is sacred and divine.

Hel. Tell me.

Leon. Its mystery is love, its meaning youth, and coming from you, my beauteous star of love, it is both love and youth indeed.

Hel. You have words for all things, where I have none.

Leon And you have smiles and kisses that will brighten the sternest of us men, and kindle a fire of love in the smallest of hearts.—Smiles that can make the weariest of men forget his sorrow aud grief, and reveal to him a world of joy and happiness. Kisses, that will

touch the very roots of a man's being, and raise him to the highest standard of mortal happiness; kisses that can never be forgotten, but cling to the memory for ever and ever. You have the power to sweep the heartstrings of a man's soul, and raise him to an elysian delight.

Hel. And have I really kindled a fire of love in your heart?

Leon. Not only kindled, but you have increased it to a sea of love, that, should your love suddenly cease to feed it, would leave behind it a cinder, that naught but death can withdraw.

Hel. And you have done the same—'twas you that revealed to me happiness and joy hitherto unknown to me. It was your presence and your words of affection that made me realize the highest degree of worldly bliss. It was your kisses that revealed to me a new world, a world of love and seemingly eternal happiness and pleasure. It was you that made my heart swell within me, and sent the blood thrilling through every vein in my body, as you pressed your first burning kiss upon my trembling lips. 'Twas you that read my thoughts aright, and stilled the strange longing that I myself could not explain. In short, 'twas you that showed me the blissful sides of love and virtue, and 'tis you that has conquered my heart and encircled it with love's brightest and happiest expectations. I love you with all the heart that a woman can give, I love you dearly; enough, there is not a fraction of my heart but what you own.

Leon. My beauteous star of love! [hug and kiss each other.] And was it really me that revealed to you a world of love and happiness? Was it my first kiss that quieted the secret trouble of your loving heart, and made it rejoice?

Hel. It was so, indeed and in truth, and more than this, the memory of your first burning kiss will cling to me forever and ever.

Leon. My own true, loving Helen, your confession makes me the happiest man in the universe.

Hel. And your love has made me the happiest member of my sex, and often have I been wondering if you love me as much as I love you, or if you ever would cease to love me.

Leon. I cease to love you! you, my only ambition? Never!

If I was an angel this moment, possessed
My choice 'twixt your love and the Heaven of rest,
I'd slip from my body its snowy white gown,
And tear from my forehead its beautiful crown,
To you I should fly, and seek heavens of bliss,
To hear your sweet voice, and to taste of your kiss!

Hel. And I should do the same. I wish I could hasten the time when we shall part no more.

Leon. Only two months more, my darling, and then you are forever mine, and moments of longing and parting shall no longer disturb our happiness. Forever shall we be happy, and wrapt in love undying and divine, together we will float through all the sorrows and pleasures of this world, and lips to lips and eyes to eyes drink of desires grown sweeter and sweeter with every draught. There shall be no power, mortal or immortal, that can sever the bonds of our affection, and happiness undying shall crown forever our union.

[Kiss each other.

Hel. By the way, Leonard, have you found out anything concerning papa's strange acting?

Leon. No, nothing serious only—

Enter Mary.

Mary. Here is a telegram for Mr Fairfield. It was just handed to me. [Exit.

Leon. (Reads, pauses thoughtfully.)

Hel. Is it bad news, Leonard?

Leon. No, darling, not bad, yet too bad, as I must necessarily shorten my call. (Hands Helen the telegram.)

Hel. (Reads). 'Tis a hateful telegram.

Leon. Hateful, indeed. How it pains me to leave you.

Hel. I shall long to see you again soon.

Leon. Tomorrow night shall see me safe return to steal another kiss from your rosy lips.

Hel. Not steal, but give and make me happy.

Leon. And now I must leave you, my love, so good night. (Kisses her. Starts to go. Returns). How forgetful of me—I have something for you, my own darling. (Takes a ring and puts it on her finger.) Take this—a serpent, the emblem of eternity; a ruby in its mouth, say a drop of my heart's blood. It will remind you that my heart is yours, and yours alone; that my love is yours, and no one can take it from you.

Hel. Oh! how beautiful! It tells me that some one stole my heart.

Leon. And gave you mine in return.

Hel. An honest thief, to steal but what you gave.

Leon. And what I stole I never shall return. And now I must leave you, so good night, my star of love. [Kiss and exit.

Hel. Good night, my love. (Looking after him; sits down). What a strange feeling has come over me. It seems as if my only friend had left me, never to return again. (Looking at the ring). A serpent, emblem of eternity. Eternal shall be my love for him. A ruby, a drop of his heart's blood. His heart is my heart, and both shall beat alike while traveling through this journey of life.

[Silently thinking.)

Enter Mary.)

Mary. Miss Helen! Miss Helen!

Hel. What is it, Mary? Are you frightened?

Mary. No, I am not, but I have cause to be alarmed about you.

Hel. About me? why, Mary, what do you mean?

Mary. Yes, Miss Helen, about you, because your happiness is at stake.

Hel. My happiness! Are you dreaming, Mary?

Mary. Wished the Lord that I was, but please, Miss Helen, don't get scared if I tell you some very bad news.

Hel. What is it? Is my father sick or in danger?

Mary. No, 'tis yourself, Miss Helen, that is in danger of being made miserable and unhappy for the rest of your young life.

Hel. How? Tell me quick, Mary.

Mary. Prepare for the worst, and be silent, for your own dear sake.

Hel. Tell me! tell me!

Mary. You are to marry the man you hate worst of all else, Baron Levy. (Helen faints.) I knew it would be a shock to her;

poor child, to be made miserable for the rest of her life. What misery and pain is there that men would not throw upon us poor women. What fearful creatures men can be. But it shall not be so if I can prevent it. No, no, Miss Helen is too young and beautiful to taste of the cup of eternal misery and wretchedness. (Gives her water)

Hel. (Comes to.) Where am I?

Mary. You are safe, Miss Helen, and God will be your friend.

Hel. Give me some water, Mary.

Mary. Be calm, Miss Helen, it shall not be so.

Hel. What shall not be?

Mary. Poor child, she has forgot all about it, the news was too much for her.

Hel. What shall not be so, Mary?

Mary. Your marriage to Baron Levy.

Hel. Ha! I remember now. Tell me, oh tell me, for the love of mercy, tell me all you know.

Mary. Take some more water, Miss Helen, and you will feel better.

Hel. Thank you, Mary, now tell me all you know.

Mary. You remember you sent me to Mr. Dighby's office with a note, this afternoon?

Hel. Perfectly; proceed.

Mary. Well, Mr. Dighby was engaged, and I had to wait. I took a seat close to the private office doorway and read. Presently I heard Mr. Dighby sighing loudly, and knew that he was talking with somebody about you. I started to listen, and after considerable talk about you I heard a man say that if your father promised him the hand of his daughter, by tomorrow night he should again be the prosperous Harley Dighby, and the marriage was to take place the same night. I knew it wasn't Mr. Fairfield's voice, and so I opened the door very cautiously, and looked inside. They didn't see me though, but I saw them, and as true as you are living there was Baron Levy talking to your father about your being made his wife. I shut the door again, and listened outside. They said lots more which I could not understand, and then Mr. Dighby gave his promise. I waited no longer, but hastened to you, to tell you of your danger, and now I have had the first chance to do so.

Hel. Did you really see Baron Levy in papa's private office?

Mary. Indeed I did. Yes, I heard Mr. Dighby call him by his name.

Hel. And are you sure you have heard just what you have told me?

Mary. As sure as I am a friend of yours, Miss Helen. Only half an hour ago Baron Levy came to your father, and they are even now in his room.

Hel. Thank you, Mary. I shall go and see myself. Mary, stay here until I return. (Exit.

Mary. She goes to see her father; poor child, I hope she won't come to harm. (Goes to the door and listens). Ha! she doesn't go in. She is listening to their conversation. (Returns). How mean and wretched she must feel. What a blow this must be to her dreams of future joy and happiness. And, too, what will Leonard think and do, should they succeed in robbing him of his bride? Would he not

think his love false, and curse her and the whole sex? Might it not result in serious troubles, danger, bloodshed? Will not Leonard thirst for revenge, and risk their lives or his own? 'Tis too horrible to think of it. (Enter Helen.) Have I told you the truth, Miss Helen?

Hel. 'Tis only too true—I am to be miserable for life. (Sinks down on the seat).

Mary. No, not so, Miss Helen. Have you forgotten the teachings of your loving mother? Was it not her that told you that there is one to whom even the greatest troubles of this world are but slight occurrences? Look up, Miss Helen; your mother's friend is yours as well, and He will never forsake you. As yet, not all is lost; all may yet be gained, and your life may yet be one of loving bliss. Trust in God, and He will save you.

Hel. Thank you, Mary, thank you. Please give me paper and pen. (She writes). Here, Mary, take this letter, and be sure and mail it tonight. Leonard must have it as soon as possible.

Mary. Indeed he must. (Exit.)

Hel. My mother's friend is mine as well. (Weeping.) Why, Oh why was I born? Why did I not die in my mother's arms? Why cannot I be happy with her in heaven above? Why is the life of the innocent flavored with sorrow and grief more bitter than gall? Why does this villain seek to destroy a life as young and holy as mine?—why indeed? (Weeping—Starting suddenly to her feet.) No! forever no! It can, it shall not be! With cold iron we may safely toy, but a woman's affection is too precious to be trifled with. Never shall this villain be able to hold a key to my heart, to learn its secrets and make it yield up its best treasury. Never shall he pride himself of having bought the affection of her whom he pretends to love, yet inwardly must hate, because of the price he had to pay for her.—Never shall he say that my father's wealth and prosperity was gained by giving his only daughter into the hands of a civilized slaver.—Never shall his head be pillowed upon my bosom, and never shall my lips meet his to exchange a kiss as a token of affection. I can and will defend myself with the weapons with which honor and virtue will supply me, and—

*Never! never! shall I break the promise I have made to the one I love—never!

*To be said standing, in the attitude of an oath.

ACT IV.

INTERIOR OF COUNTING-HOUSE, THE SAME AS IN ACT II. DIGHBY IN HIS OFFICE.

Scene opens with a porter dusting office.

Por. (Going to leave office).

Harl. Say there, come back here.

Por. (Returns).

Harl. Ain't you forgot something this morning?

Por. No, I guess not.

Harl. I think you did.

Por. What is it?

Harl. Ain't you forgot to fill the inkstands?

Por. No, I didn't. I couldn't find no ink to fill them with.

Harl. I guess you didn't look in the right place for it; you will find a whole barrel of ink in the room down stairs.

Por. I didn't know of it.

Harl. Well, you don't want to forget it again tomorrow morning.

Por. No, sir.

Harl. Here, take this letter to the office, as soon as you can.

Por. Yes, sir. [Exit.

Long. I guess he'll never learn to keep the office in good shape.

Harl. Oh, he will learn after a while. He's kind o' shy yet.

Pott. He ain't got used to us yet, I think.

Enter Mr Turner..

Tur. Good morning, gentlemen.

Harl and others. Good morning.

Tur. Is Mr. Dighby in?

Harl. Yes. sir? what name, please?

Tur. (Hands him card).

Harl. (Enters private office). There is a gentleman wishes to see you. (Gives him the card).

Digh. Admit him. (Exit.

Harl. Will you please step inside, sir?

Enter Mr. Turner.

Tur. Good morning, Mr. Dighby.

Digh. Good morning, sir.

Tur. Allow me to introduce myself as Paul Turner. I represent Messrs Gardner & Hunt, manufacturers of ladies' dress goods and silks, of Hamburg. We wish to have a representative in England, and Messrs. Green & Gowdy recommended you as an able merchant to introduce our goods to the trade. I should be very delighted if we could make an arrangement with you whereby the trade as well as you would be greatly benefited.

Digh. I should like to get acquainted with your prices and terms, but I cannot do so just now. My business is very thriving today, and really I cannot afford the time to do so. Can you not call on me again some other day, Mr Turner? say about this time next Saturday.

Tur. Certainly, Mr. Dighby, any time it may suit your business.

Digh. Very well, I shall see you next Saturday morning, and perhaps we may make an arrangement.

Tur. I think we will, as our prices are as low as any in the market, and our goods are far superior to a good many. But I must no longer take up your time, so good day, Mr. Dighby.

Digh. Good day, sir. [Exit Turner, Dighby rings bell, enter Harl. Mr. Herland, have you received the bills for the last shipment of woolens from Messrs. Fowler & Dalton?

Harl. Yes, sir.

Digh. What terms?

Harl. Six per cent by sixty days.

Digh. When did the goods come?

Harl. To-day, sir.

Digh. Have you taken a list of them?

Harl. Not yet, sir; we havn't had time.

Digh. Have you an answer from Leslie & Co.?

Harl. I have; they accept your offer at thirty days, freight paid.

Digh. Have you shipped the goods?

Harl. I sent them this morning, sir.

Digh. Send Mr. Potter down to the dock, to take a list of the goods. I want it at three o'clock.

Harl. Yes, sir.

Digh. Have Mr. Long make out a bill of all imports as well as exports for the last two weeks, as soon as he can.

Harl. Yes, sir.

Digh. That is all. [Exit Harl.

Harl. (To Clerks). Potter, you are to go down to the dock to take a list of goods arrived this morning.

Pott. How soon.

Harl. Right after dinner; it is wanted at three o'clock, sharp.

Pott. All right.

Harl. Mr. Long, you will please make out a list of all imports as well as exports for the last two weeks, as soon as you can.

Long. Yes, sir. Say, how did you find the governor? Could you detect any symptoms of immediate trouble among the crew, or is he taking it as cool as usual?

Harl. I don't know. He didn't give me a chance to look him in the face. Folks can't judge a man's feelings by looking at the back of his head, you know.

Long. No, not very well; I didn't know but what he might have given you an idea by the way he spoke.

Harl. None whatever, as far as I could see.

Pott. I think we'll find it out quick enough, if he wants to let us know about his feelings.

Harl. I think so, too. [Enter Porter, gives Harland the mail, and exit. Harland looking over the mail; enter Baron Levy.]

Levy. Good morning, gentlemen.

Harl. and others. Good morning.

Levy. Is Mr. Dighby in?

Harl. Yes, sir. [Enters private office.] Baron Levy wishes to see you.

Digh. Admit him.

Harl. Please step inside, Baron Levy.

Levy. Good day, Mr. Dighby.

Digh. Good day, sir. Any progress?

Levy. Yes, sir, something important.

Digh. I am all attention.

Levy. Your daughter seems to know what we propose to do.

Digh. Impossible! How could she, or anybody else, know anything of what we spoke about yesterday? There was not anybody in this office at the time you and I made arrangements. No, indeed, there was not, for my clerks leave this place at six o'clock. Besides this, they would not dare to listen to what is said in here. Are you sure my daughter knows of our plottings?

Levy. Quite sure. And how she came to know of it is more than a mystery to me. It seems to me as though some supernatural power is playing your daughter's part.

Digh. But what is your proof that my daughter knows of it?—Who is your authority?

Levy. My proof within this letter is concealed;
By reading it the truth will be revealed. [Gives him a letter.

Digh. [Reads]. To me this is a fatal letter,
It brings to naught our plans forever,
And I a ruined man must be.
How did you get it?

Levy. Be calm, as yet not all is lost,
'Tis only in our favor;
When from your mind all fear removed,
The victors we are sure to prove.

Digh. But how did you get this letter?

Levy. I will explain.

Digh. Do so, quick; I fear that we have lost.

Levy. This morning, 'twas a rather early hour,
My footsteps guided by a secret power,
I chanced to stand before friend Fairfield's structure,
And, like a dream, bethought of my future.
A strange suspicion lurked within my heart,
And, whispering softly, told me not to part,
But to step in, and there I was to find
A link, if lost to me, my happiness would blind.
And, following the guiding of my vision,
I little knew the nature of my mission.
Went in, to find two letters on a chair,
And both of them friend Fairfield's name did bear;
My strange suspicion lurked within anew,
And told me read this letter ere you go.
I did, and strange to say, we found
The link that our success shall crown.

Digh. And I must be a ruined man?

Levy. Not so, my friend, 'tis all in our favor.

Digh. I can't see how.

Levy. Simply enough—
We alter the letter, and then we put
It back where I have found it;
By doing this we too do know
The plans the lovers will pursue,
And Fairfield, free of all suspicion,
Is quickly to submission driven.

Digh. How will you do it? I don't understand you.

Levy. We will alter the time to half an hour earlier, that is half past eight, and your daughter will not expect Fairfield till nine. When Mr. Fairfield crosses the roof you will hear the noise; you are alarmed about your daughter's safety, and go to her room; I happen to be your guest, and naturally follow you; you see Fairfield in the act of climbing through the window; you are enraged because of his conduct, and forbid him your house forever; you demand your daughter to marry me to pay for her uncivil behavior. She will be taken completely by surprise, and will easily submit. I persuade you to be calm, but you are stern, and send for a minister, who will be waiting outside. The marriage takes place, and you will again be

the prosperous and wealthy Harley Dighby, as in years past. Now, what do you say? [Dighby silent.] I think we shall accomplish our object as cute as any man could do it. What do you say?

Digh. Do as you proposed. I could not look at it in this way when you first gave me the letter, and I really thought we had been plotting in vain and lost all.

Levy. Ha! ha! ha! Two heads are better than one, you know. [Alters the letter.] It is done. and we shall be victorious.

Digh. Read it to me.

Levy. [Reads the letter.]

DEAR LEONARD:

Come to me tomorrow night, and be prepared for an elopement. We must do this to save my honor, as well as myself from eternal misery and grief. If you love me, do not fail to come. Come to my room over the roof, through the window to the right, at half past eight o'clock, sharp and safe.

Your ever faithful

HELEN.

Digh. It is good; it will work.

Levy. To be sure, all the chances are in our favor.

Digh. Have you the papers?

Levy. I have.

Digh. Let me have them.

Levy. Not till your daughter is my wife.

Digh. She shall be.

Levy. I hope so; but not till then.

Digh. Very well. Take the letter back as soon as you can possibly do it.

Levy. And that is now. When we meet again I shall be made your son-in-law.

Digh. If everything goes well.

Levy. It will, and you will be as prosperous as of old.

Digh. Be on time, and have everything in readiness.

Levy. Depend on me, and all shall be well. Adieu. [Exit.

Digh. Ha! My future son-in-law! your wife will not be as easily won as you think. Ha! ha! ha! You never got those papers through honest dealings. I have you completely in my power, and you shall hear from me again. Ha! ha! ha!

ACT V.

HELEN DIGHBY'S ROOM, DIMLY LIGHTED.

[Enter Helen, softly.]

Hel. All is well. Leonard will be here soon, and within ten hours I shall be the wife of him who truly loves me. In vain they have brewed me misfortune—in vain they have exercised their villainous brains to their utmost capacity, only to find their treacherous plans ruined by a helpless woman. In vain they have sought to rob me of mine honor, and change a life of virtue and innocence to one of misery and grief. Shame and a stained name shall be the reward of their villainy as long as they live, and no more shall they be able to hold up their heads like men whose lives are crowned with a pure, spotless conscience, and whose very presence is one of expectant

rhapsody. True, 'tis sweet to live in wealth and luxury—it is grand to be respected by everybody because of wealth—it is fine to know one's self to be on top of the golden ladder of social circles and society—but to be in misery forever is worse than a slow death. I shall not be very rich, but I will be happy. Rather poor and happy than be the slave of a rich villain, and be wretched and miserable forever.

Riches never make me happy,
No name, however great,
Will dip immortal scales.
But, if my lot is happiness and peace,
If I'm content, and do as I may please,
Yes, then indeed,
Is happiness complete.

[Passes up and down the room. Enter Mary.]

Mary. Miss Helen, be on your guard. Baron Levy has just come to see your father.

Hel. Where are they?

Mary. In Mr. Dighby's room, busily talking.

Hel. Mary, go into the parlor and listen to all they say. If you hear anything serious, let me know immediately. Make haste, and be careful lest they might hear you.

Mary. I'll do all I can to help you. [Exit.

Hel. Ha! Bitter will be their disappointment; they will curse the day on which they were blasted by a woman's wit. Live long, baffled traitors! live long to adorn my triumph, and set the seal of guilt upon your shame and villainy. The nest they will find, but the bird they will not. Upon wings of love I shall make the journey to a safer place—to a place where a woman's honor and virtue cannot be tampered with, and no rich villain dare to look upon her as his slave. [Enter Mary, excited] What is it? speak!

Mary. Prepare for the worst. I have just heard them say that within half an hour they will enter your chamber through yonder window, and then force you to marry Baron Levy. Baron Levy said as soon as you are his wife he will give your father some papers, and then all will be well.

Hel. Cruel! It shall not be well. Mary, is the cab waiting at the garden gate?

Mary. Yes, all is ready, only Leonard is not here.

Hel. He will be, soon. Go and listen again, and mark well all they say [Exit Mary.] Ha! This villain dares to enter my chamber in this fashion, and rob him who truly loves me of his happiness. Do I not know that Leonard's heart beats all in tune to mine? Have I not seen the eyes of my adored aswim with passion's tears as he sighed his vows upon my breast, and felt my heart swell within me as he pressed his first burning kiss upon my trembling lips? Had I not lost myself in the mystery of his soul? Have I not proved that his love for me is as true as is mine for him? 'Twas Leonard who plead for my love in return—'twas he who touched my heart. 'Twas Leonard that taught me how nature can overcome our naked loneliness—'twas he who conquered and with the golden web of Love wove one identity. 'Twas Leonard that climbed to my heart upon the invisible ladder of love, and there stamped

his name with his first burning kiss. Have I not pledged my self upon my virtue to be as true as only a faithful, loving woman can be? And, now, must I break my promise, to make a loving heart wretched and miserable for life? Must I marry a villain to make my father prosperous, and deliver myself into the hands of eternal misery to which only death alone can be mercy? Never! Is it not my duty to give my passion free rein, and make happy him who truly loves me—him who has won my heart from me and gave his in exchange—him who has laid his entire happiness at my feet, and whose love no other but my own can soothe? Love is too precious to be trifled with. It shall not be! This monster has wiled from me my father's heart, banished my love, murdered my peace and joy forever. And now he steals hither, like the thief that he is, to rob me of my honor, and make me miserable forever. The cup of his villainy has overflowed. I will meet him on the threshold of the chamber he would profane, and [taking a dagger from her bosom and holding it above her head] this shall lay him at my feet, the victim of a just revenge! [Passes slowly up to the window, and conceals herself behind the curtain. Enter Leonard through the window, cautiously—takes one step.]

Leon. (softly.) Where is my star of love? Am I too late?

Hel. (springing from behind the curtain.) Ha! What horror is this? [Stabs him. Leonard falls with a choking cry. Enter Dighby, Levy and Mary.]

Digh. What has happened?

Hel. (Turning, sees Levy—starts—goes to Leonard.) 'Tis he! 'tis he! my heart's elected! [Faints. Dighby catches her.] Away! You are no friends of mine! [Takes dagger from Leonard's bosom, and runs between Dighby and Levy, who jump aside.] Villains! you have killed him! Kill me, too! [Stabs herself. Mary catches her in her arms.]

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